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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE

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AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

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FOR MANAGEMENT OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE
COORDINATORS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AMGT, KFLO, APER

SUBJECT: PREPARING FAMILY MEMBER APPLICANTS FOR THE 2006
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES (PA) PROGRAM

PLEASE PASS TO ALL EFMS AT POST

1. Summary: The Office of Career Development and Assignments (HR/CDA) will announce the 2006 Professional Associates (PA) Program in a separate telegram on or about March 3. The CDA cable will contain specific information on the application process and will include a listing of hard-to-fill (HTF) Foreign Service (FS) positions for which US Citizen Eligible family members can apply. US Citizen EFMs selected for these positions will be hired as Professional Associates on Family Member Appointments (FMA). The salaries will be centrally funded. In anticipation of the announcement, the Family Liaison Office offers the following frequently asked questions in order to prepare family members to respond to the announcement cable. End summary.

2. What is the difference between the Professional Associates Program and the hard-to-fill exercise?

Positions that are underbid by qualified Foreign Service bidders are designated HTF. These positions are opened up to Department of State career Civil Service employees and to US Citizen Eligible Family Members (EFMs) at the post to which their respective sponsoring employee is assigned. US Citizen EFMs selected for these positions are hired as

Professional Associates on Family Member Appointments (FMA).

3. Do agencies other than State Department offer job opportunities in the PA Program?

The Professional Associates Program is unique to the Department of State.

4. Who is eligible to apply for these positions?

For the purposes of this exercise, you must be a US Citizen EFM spouse or child at least 18 years old on the travel orders of a direct hire USG Foreign Service, Civil Service or uniformed service member from any agency under COM authority) assigned to the overseas post for which you wish to apply.

5. Are US Citizen EFMs of non-State employee eligible for the PA Program?

This Program is open to all US Citizen Eligible Family Members whose sponsoring employee serves under the umbrella of the Chief of Mission. For the purposes of this program, a US Citizen EFM (AEFM) is defined in 3 FAM 8212b.

6. Do US Citizen EFMS of Department of State employees receive preference for PA placement?

PA positions are filled by the eligible candidate who best meets the requirements of the position regardless of agency affiliation.

7. What are the other eligibility requirements?

Specific requirements will be outlined in detail in the announcement cable. However, in order to serve in these positions, you must have or be eligible for a USG security clearance. This requires U.S. citizenship. If selected, you must commit to working in the PA position for one year.

8. Where will I find the positions?

The HTF positions will be listed at the end of the announcement cable in the following format:

Grade/post/position/incumbent/org code/position number

Example: fs02/seoul/gso/jones/331001/3124300

9. What kind of information should I include in my application?

We advise family members to consult the job requirements for the specific position in order to submit a viable application. Family members should tailor the application to the position and address the requirements completely. Links to information on the knowledge, skills, abilities and experience required for FS positions on the Department of State (DOS) career website follow.

<http://careers.state.gov> - home page go to FS officer-
what does an FS officer do?
<http://www.foreignservicecareers.com/officer/careertrack> -
survey on FSO career tracks
<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/roles/management.html>
- management officer
<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/roles/consular.html>
- consular officer
<http://careers.state.gov/officer/roles/economic.html> -
economic officer
<http://careers.state.gov/officer/roles/political.html> -
political officer
<http://careers.state.gov/officer/roles/diplomacy.html> -
public diplomacy officer
[http://www.careers.state.gov/specialist/opportunities/
index.html](http://www.careers.state.gov/specialist/opportunities/index.html) - specialist information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to network with the regional bureaus in order to obtain supplemental information on the positions listed in the announcement cable. It would be appropriate to e-mail or otherwise contact the Human Resources Officer in charge of FS assignments in the Executive Office of the bureau concerned. These individuals will be identified in the announcement cable. Networking with these points of contact to gain further insight could be essential to developing a focused application and could be vital to the outcome of the application process.

Additionally, applicants may consult FSBid to access the capsule description of a position in which they are interested and contact the incumbent of the position to request his/her work requirements statement.

10. I am currently on a Family Member Appointment (FMA). If selected, how will this affect my current appointment?

Family Member Appointments are limited non-career FS appointments with a five-year not-to-exceed (NTE) date. They are position specific. If you are selected for a Professional Associate position, you will be converted from your current FMA to a new FMA with an NTE date of five years from the date of the new appointment.

11. I understand in the past that positions were limited. Is that the case now and, if so, why?

In the recent past, the implementation of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative increased the Department's ability to hire more Foreign Service employees to fill vacant positions. This resulted in fewer positions available to family members. Staffing and hiring programs have always been and will continue to be subject to funding availability.

12. Who reviews my application?

Once your application is received, it will first be reviewed to ensure that you meet the eligibility and qualification requirements and then vetted through a panel of subject matter experts to determine your qualifications against the job requirements. CDA will forward qualified applicants' names to the respective bureaus for review and consideration.

13. When will I be notified of the qualifying panel's action? Who will be contacting me to let me know whether or not I qualify for consideration for the position I bid on?

We anticipate that the qualifying panels will complete their reviews in mid-to late April. The HR/CDA PA Coordinator will contact all applicants by the end of April.

14. The grade level for these positions will be listed on the announcement cable. Is that the grade at which I will be hired? If not, how will grade level be determined?

The grade level on the announcement cable indicates the full performance level of the position. If you are selected for the position, a qualified human resources specialist will determine your grade, based on the qualifications you outlined in the application. Previously PA grades were set at FP-06; however, now the grade can be higher since it will be set based on the qualifications of the individual selected for the job.

15. Are PA's given the hardship differential paid to officers?

US Citizen EFMs selected for PA positions are hired on Family Member Appointments (FMAs). While this mechanism conveys benefits (FERS, TSP, FEGLI and FEHB eligibility), compensation would include the base salary level of the determined grade only. However, FMAs are automatically eligible for danger pay at those posts for which danger pay has been approved and COLA at the three posts that

have requested an exception for their FMAs based on prevailing conditions - London, Tokyo and Geneva.

16. I have previously served as a Consular Associate. Will I be able to be considered for vacant consular positions advertised as HTF?

Given the fact that the adjudication function is reserved for commissioned Foreign Service officers and direct hire civil service employees on excursion tours, family members will not be eligible to apply for those positions that require the ability to adjudicate. Any limitations will be outlined in the announcement cable. The Consular Associate Program remains available to qualified US Citizen EFMs. Consular Associates are hired locally at post.

17. Additional guidance, FAQs, and updates will be posted on FLO's website as they become available at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/htf.htmls>. We encourage family members to use this information in order to prepare and submit the most comprehensive and accurate application package possible.

18. Minimize considered
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